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THE
ULTIMATUM;

A
SHORT TALE
WITH A
LONG MORAL.

BY
LIEUT.-COL. BLACHFORD

Now twang the trumpet, beat the drum,
Thro' village, town and valley,
Sound war's alarm, for all to run,
And round the old flag rally.

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CHITANU

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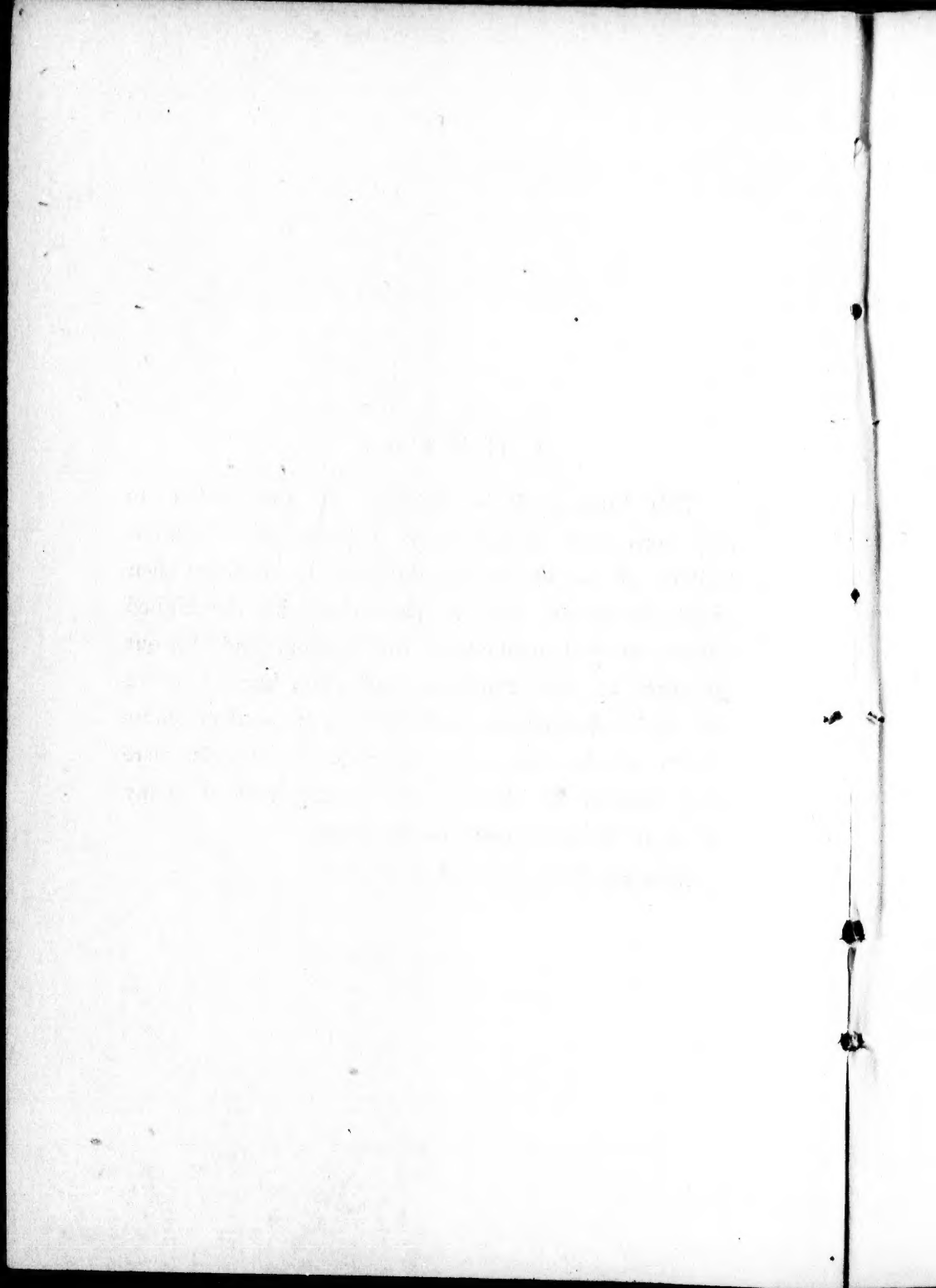
CHITANU

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P R E F A C E.

This little work is inscribed by the author to the sons and daughters of Canada, as a humble tribute of his respect for the memory of those their noble forefathers, who in past wars with the United States so well maintained the freedom and honour in arms of this Province, and thus handed down to their descendants and all after settlers those rights which, after many an arduous struggle, were only secured at the expense of the lives of many of their brave companions in arms.

KOMOKA, C.W., Dec. 6th, 1866.



THE ULTIMATUM.

"The Trent" has made Britannia's strand,
Our Queen a council called—
A tale has reached Old England,
That she was overhauled.
In palace, cot and ancient hall,
In county and in town,
Her sons and daughters roused all,
And ominous their frown.
A stern resolve broods o'er each brow,
As storm clouds o'er the sky;
A hurricane there brewing now,
O'er th' Atlantic fierce to fly,
Whose gusty whirls, as yet suppressed,
Tho' heard its muttered thunder,
As th' oceans when aroused from rest,
By storm ere torn asunder.
That hurrying to and fro is seen,
As restless waves inclined,
All surging thus, as when we glean,
A brewing storm behind;
That universal restlessness
In time's impending trouble,
Itself which vents in idleness,
When bursts such news' bubble.

The ploughman leaves his work to talk,
The master's to the street,
Where all are seen to stop or stalk,
And talk with all they meet.
And many "the gude wife," idle, too,
Work stays to twirl her apron,
And gossip, too, of what she'd do,
Who should first do her capon.

And now our Queen a council keeps,
Lest war her lands befall,
While thus her people stalk the streets,
The news to canvass all.
Indignant burns the royal cheek,
Where injured feeling seen,
To crimson with its fervid streak
Our sovereign—the Queen—
As the o'erheated atmosphere
Vent finds when overpressed,
O'er heaven's horizonic sphere,
And spreads its lightning's vest,
Her clouded brow and flashing eye,
Which now no more serene,
Remind one of the lurid sky
In which that lightning seen.
Her mouth, with curved lips apart,
For loving smiles which formed,
A pretty pout which this impart,
By trouble now transformed,
Shows but the closely clenching lip,
Firm character which gives,
That harsher line in trouble's grip,
Its milder which outlives.

Convulsed her troubled bosom's throb,
With difficulty she
Restrains her injured feeling's sob,
Within her sovereignty.

"My lords," she says, with quivering lip,
"We hear with sorrows shame,
The Federal States our peaceful ship
Have boarded on the main,
And from our flag, all protest vain,
Two Southroners conveyed,
With armed crews, to our great pain,
Our honor thus betrayed.

This Trent! our mail! on service borne!
Between each neutral port!

Our officers in uniform!

Was e'er such insult wrought?
Now, shall this pass, my noble lords!

No subject in our realm
More prizes all that peace affords,
Nor would we wrongly helm,

But by our just prerogative,
We will not tamely see
Our flag dishonored while we live—

My lords, this shall not be.

"This nation of all others
Has ever stern refused,
This right she now discovers
May legally be used.

Nor is this all. She has abused
This search to us denied,
With force of arms, in this case used,
Our flags-guard and defied.

“ Her fatal influence seems to blast
Our cherished hope of peace—
No sooner cherished than o’ercast,
God grant these men release!
Ah me! we little thought last year,
When Albert she received,
With her, perchance, that war was near!
Alas! we’re sore deceived!
United then, she smiled upon
Our son, and all seemed friends,
Who ’fore thy tomb, great Washington!
For past wars vowed amends.
There by thy spirit, Washington!
We trusted all forewarned,
No future war to carry on,
This precious hope—how mourned!
Magnanimous she ne’er was found,
We fear she ne’er will be;
By kindness she cannot be bound
To treat us courteously.

“ My lords, we think ye will allow
That we have ever been
Solicitous for peace, as now,
As far as might beseem.
For sake of this we’ve much endured
From this o’erbearing nation,
But peace we deem too dear secured
At the price of reputation.
And by our troth! forbearance now
To us seems out of place—
To such an insult did we bow,
Our crown we should disgrace.

Too oft already have we made
Concessions to save war—
With her which we would still evade,
The stakes so serious are.

“ But there are limits, which, once passed,
No risk, however great,
Shall tempt us more, as in the past,
Thus to conciliate.

That time has come—in honor's cause,
We must defend our right—
We will maintain our neutral laws,
And for our honor fight,

“ Not ours, now, the wish to break
The bonds which should unite
Two kindred nations, if she make
A reparation right.

If not, the onus needs must rest
Upon the head of those
Who never yet a wrong confessed,
Whose sole redress is blows.
Who this unwillingness to war
In us to fear impute,
A charge so false, none falser are,
Scarce worth us to refute.

“ Unworthy they, our kindred land,
Who thus would vilify
A people who, on sea and land,
Theirs fought so fearlessly;
A land their own forefathers loved,
And no degenerate race,
As all their foes have ever proved,

Who fear naught but disgrace;
Who bear a brave and honoured name,
Who fear alone their God,
For man who never felt the same
When to the charge they tread.

"Then let our flag, ne'er lowered yet
But that it rose again,
Dishonoured now, convey our threat,
And wipe out insult's stain.
A ship of war, all full equipped,
Dispatch this troublous nation,
Demanding that these men be shipped
At once, as reparation.
Or failing this, our just resolve—
War's grave and sad solution
Our kindred nations must involve,
Then our sole retribution.

"But let our ultimatum
Still courteously run,
All other course would ill become
The land from which we come.
Although the horrors of such war,
Its sad results to both,
Apparent to reflection are,
And we to such must loath—
We will not one iota less
Consent to ever take
Than from these States, in our address,
We ultimatum make.

"Unworthy were we of our crown,
A monarch cowardly,

Were any blustering nation's frown
To daunt our dignity.

"If obstinate, she stubborn spurns
Our justly made demands,
And to our message mad-returns
Defiance and commands,
Then have we no alternative,
Our subjects o'er the sea
Must arm (we will assistance give),
If they would still be free.
Advise ye, then, our subjects all
Of this necessity,
'Twill grieve us much if war befall
All these so guiltlessly.

"Look well, my lords, to Canada,
With all the haste ye can,
If war, its brunt will fall on her—
Her frontier strongly man;
And tell her brave and loyal men
That all we can will we,
Tho' time be brief, to succor them
In case this war should be.
Both blood and treasure we will spend,
Our last man and last shilling,
Ere any foreign yoke shall bend
These brave men, if unwilling.

"My lords, if ruffled we have said
What ye in council deem
Precipitate, excuse be made
We're but a woman—Queen;
From all of ye, our councillors,

Opinion we would hear—
Your sovereign, lest war occurs,
Would by your counsel steer.
Then speak, our trusty Palmerston,
For this, our council here—
Does this our action here upon
A Queenly one appear?"

Now read as plain as written there
Upon each council's brow
Its sense, nor need that lord prepare,
At once, who speaks it now.
"Most honoured and beloved Queen,
Your lords and council feel
This insult such as we all deem,
Demands our Queen's appeal;
Nor would we counsel other course
To our beloved Queen,
As loath, although, to war's recourse,
Whose honour ours we deem.
Where'er her royal standard flies
No subject in her realm
Who will not all that in him lies
For such a wrong to helm.
Our royal mistresses' commands
At once shall be obeyed,
This exigency now demands
That no delay be made.
And should these Federal States refuse,
If stubborn, they shall find
That Britain, though she peace would choose,
In war ne'er lags behind."

Then o'er our noble Queen there comes
A glow of pleasure bright,
Thro' all her frame at once which runs,
And fills her souls delight,
Just like some night-clad landscape's-scene,
By lowering clouds oppressed,
On which the happy sunshine's beam
At dawn is seen to rest;
Her change from care to happiness,
Thus, in a moment's time,
Illuminates her dark distress,
As night the sun's first shine.

Convulsed no more her troubled breast,
Again her smile is seen,
Her eyes to beam, her lips to rest,
Again the woman—Queen.
Once more she speaks in silvery tones,
With a voice like evening's bell,
Serene and sweet, as in our homes
We often hear its swell.

“My lords, we thank ye, 'tis relief
To our o'erburdened mind
That we, our Council and its chief,
Thus in accord we find.
Our gratitude and thanks are due,
In this extremity,
To all of you to honour true,
For this we honour ye.
To God, the King of earthly kings,
The issue leave we now,
To Him who rules all earthly things,

In prayer we humbly bow;
That it may please Him still to keep
In peace His either nation,
In unity, that each may seek
To spread His Word's salvation.
And now, my lords, if war should come
Our trust is in His might—
We feel we have our duty done,
May He defend our right!"

M O R A L

AND

DESULTORY DISSERTATION.

The moral of my little tale
I scarcely need apply,
This will, I hope, itself unveil
Before each reader's eye;
But where in my discursive theme,
On passing waifs around,
Its point to some may silent seem,
On this my novel ground;
Still, those who plumb the depths which be,
Of this my new theme's purpose,
Will there, I trust, a moral see,
Tho' silent on the surface.
Thus, all who well discriminate,
At once will plainly see,
Its moral in events of late,
At least unneighborly.

It points to many a passing fact,
To many a blustering boast,
And says, that bullies thus who act,
Are often cowards most;
It points to futures which may be,
It speaks of war and trial,
Of dangers, all not blind must see,

Though some still feign denial.
Then heed not these who love their gold,
Before this land's salvation,
Who make this question of defence,
But one of calculation;
These will not see with whom expense
Is paramount or all,
Those many nobler feelings, whence,
True patriots we call.
It warns the people of this land,
"In peace for war prepare"
To watchful be, all strongly manned,
Against attack or snare;
It speaks in this late treacherous raid,
In trumpet-tones to all,
To discipline, and well parade,
Lest war upon them fall.
God grant all listen to its tones,
Determined to uphold,
Their laws, their rights, their hearths and homes,
As did her men of old;
Then let war come, for these who dies,
This land will proudly own,
Then, for the flag, ye dearly prize,
And all you love, strike home.

It puts some queries pertinent,
Your answer and awaits,
And to support its argument
These queries thus it shapes:

Are rulers, like those who permit
An unprovoked raid,

Less guilty than those making it,
And answerable made?
Are not they more so, who allow
Their people to wage war
Upon a friendly power now,
Despite their neutral law,
Are not they more so who allow
Their bull dogs, thus, a friend
To worry into union now
(Which their so obvious end).
As bullies, thus, who bull dogs keep,
To use or lend their friends;
When they or theirs such helpmates seek,
To work their wicked ends.

But what of these—their bull-dog men
The dupes of knaves who plunder;
Our prisoners now—the raiders then,
For such shall Justice slumber?
Not so—death's doom still carry out,
On those, their baser leaders,
And let their dupes, still live to flout,
Their Brotherhood's deceivers;
For such—short shrift and gallows' arm
(Shame not the rifle's doom)
No jealous lawyer should alarm,
Nor tenderest maiden gloom;
The rest let live, no more to sin,
To tell these ruling knaves,
That neither raids or wars will win,
Britannia's to be slaves.

Where now the British lion's roar—
That lion of my tale,
Whose warlike note then echoed on
Columbia's every vale,
Will neither raid, or threatened war,
Nor wrong nor insult now,
Awake that lion's warlike roar,
All lands which once could bow?
Has "peace at any price" its will,
In spite of Whig or Tory;
Is Britain going down the hill
With all her former glory?
His courage, has it pass'd away,
With jaunty Palmerston,
Denied the lion's part to play,
Her men of peace among?
Has she none now (like him) know how
To pat th' old fellow's back,
And to him say, just go in now,
That eagle's bones and crack?
If challenge you he will to fight,
And compensation claim,
Not courteously, but as his right,
For losses on the main.

No peaceful people, are they now,
Across the neighboring border,
The brand of Cain, is on their brow,
No lovers these of order;
They blood have lapped of civil war,
Which tends all to disquiet,
A lawless people, these now are,
Well trained to war and riot;

Unhappy land! whose cup of woe,
Of thine so lately drained,
Fast fills, again to overflow
The union blood has stained.
Hate, still more vengeful in defeat,
Thy Southron children fires,
In ashes smouldering tho' it sleeps—
This, blood still blood requires.
With sleepless eye of vengeance there,
Impatient still for strife,
And hand prepared none to spare
Of hateful Northron life.
These bide their opportunity,
Defeated, yet defiant,
Again to strike for liberty,
On freedom still reliant.
No communism of the mind
Attaches either race,
No sympathy of any kind
Between these any trace;
And nature, true to self, denies
Their union to sustain,
Where love no lasting link supplies,
Your bristling bayonets vain.

Tho' reeking from her bloody strife,
This now aggressive nation
Will spare no wrong, not even life,
To win our annexation.
Then arm and train, whate'er the cost,
If ye would still be free,
In time advised, ere freedom lost,
Of this necessity—

They that would live without offence,
Should offer no temptation,
And this the very best defence,
For man, his farm or nation.
For brutal beasts which love to prey,
Still fear the well-fenced fold,
(Where faithful watch-dogs fiercely bay,)
Tho' famishing and bold,
These prowl to prey on open herds,
Where dogs nor shepherds fence,
And like the as foul feeding birds,
Prey with discretion's sense.
Then guard your homes and liberty,
While still within your power;
Most jealous of the present be,
Short-lived, perchance, whose hour.
Too soon, alas, that hour may come,
When staked on your resistance,
The future fate of slaves to come,
Or freedom's proud existence.
Oh! may it find this land's prepared,
Their homes to well defend;
Each one well trained to struggle hard,
When freedom's stake the end,

Heed not the timorous, so faint heart,
That "heart of hare" well called,
At its own shadow which will start,
By its own step appalled—
Ill-omened as that luckless hare,
Our path which cross at dawn,
The first in danger to despair,
The last to face the storm;

As well might we seek counselship
From our good friends, the Quakers,
As these entrust, to steer our ship,
When close ahead the breakers;
Tho' loyal as any ours—these—
Not such the men just then;
Our hearts of oak on board to plan,
As might less peaceful men.
Nor heed the rash who will not fence,
Thus holding out temptation,
Who lack discretion's better sense,
And peril many a nation;
Too like are these, that Mancha's knight,
Who, with his trusty lance,
With windmills loved to tilt in fight,
Whatever might bechance.
Then heed not those, too rash to fence,
(Too blind to see the danger.)
For this, by God's good providence,
May long avert war's danger.

Heed neither, both injurious are,
To the safety of this land—
This fears to arm, in his despair,
That fears to be well manned;
One fears we can't defended be—
The other this can't see—
Yet, still most curious, both agree,
That no defence need we.

We can defend us, and will we!
As did her men so bold,
Who ne'er in war, could conquered be,

In those, her days of old—
Tho' wider scattered, o'er this land,
Far fewer in that hour,
Yet fought they still, and bravely mann'd,
And broke th' enslaver's power.

Not then as now, war's arms or men—
No sure repeating rifle—
In well-trained arms of either then,
Advantage gave a trifle—
Well train'd to arms, our neighbors now—
No raw militia they—
And train we must, as well I trow—
Our land or we betray.
The rifle's now, is war's first art,
To shoot most quick, most well,
In future wars, will play a part—
Most certain and most fell.

The best of rifles Prussia knew,
A war has just decided,
This left her victor—quickly too—
And Germany divided—
By such, the house of Hollenshorn's
Ascendant star bright shines,
While that of Hapsburg paler dawns,
And dims as it declines.

The best of rifles, now is yours,
This learn all well to ply,
For this, your land far best secures,
From all war's misery.
For never yet, land fortified,

For the rifle so effective,
As your's by the bush, where, if well plied,
'T will prove your best detective.
Then spare not trouble, time, or pains,
Your rifle's art acquire,
With steady arm, each true that aims,
Shall in the bull's-eye fire.
For such true marksmen will decide
The future of this land,
And tame the fell invader's pride,
Its conquest who has planned.
With such, and gunboats, sure to make,
Maintain'd by Britain's power,
Tho' war may burst o'er land and lake,
None then need dread that hour.

Entwine ye then, in lov'd embrace,
(Britannia's all) each land,
From where Vancouver's Isle we trace,
To old Newfoundland's strand;
Consolidate your growing power,
Now frittered all away,
While waiting union's happier hour,
A nobler part to play.

As sunbeams when diffused, we find,
Yield not their greatest power,
Till by the magic lens combined,
These shed their burning shower.
This union now, all quick empower
And ye must great become;
An embryo empire waits that hour,
Impatient forth to come,

Upon us now its advent's hour,
Already near the dawn,
Of this now rising future power,
By time fast onward borne.
Whose arms outspread, in their embrace,
Two oceans and a sea,
Shall clasp and cradle in their space,
By time and rocked be;
Whose orient, and whose occident,
A semi-hemisphere,
O'er whose expanse of waters sent
The fleets of every sphere.

Now, floating on those inland seas,
And rivers of her land,
The eye prophetic plainly sees
The commerce of each strand,
Thus flooding land and water course,
Some living shall behold,
This borne of many an iron horse
'Tween the new world and th' old.

Whose sun, in his diurnal race,
Scarce span that empire round,
Tho' half the world he daily trace,
While on his mission bound.
A noble land, whose future whole,
No other then shall fear,
Whose pillow, on the far north pole,
Whose foot on its south sphere,
An empire, yet, which God may will,
To rule this western sphere
Whose future He alone can fill,
To Whom all things are clear.

Then shall we such bright hopes resign!
This land's which may become
Among these stars and stripes to shine,
When ours may shine a sun!
In its own orbit moving on,
O'er this, our heritage free,
Where never slave, the soil upon,
To blot with infamy.
Then who a little star would shine,
For whom hope's sun so bright,
Who with those stars his fate would twine,
To twinkle with their light.

What tho' these states out numbered us.
In men and means far more,
Shall we still breathe! nor blush to bow!
Right's knee their wrong before!
Beats there one heart, whose flag its pride,
One of Britannia's come,
Would see her flag of old denied,
And theirs, this land's become,
Breathes there a soul, this land's among,
One such degenerate son,
To basely wish this province one
Of their stars to become?
Those stars, free states, which represent,
Whose stripes seem meant for slaves,
This happier land can ne'er content,
Their friendship though she craves.
Alas her wish, how vain, when seen
These ne'er her friends will be,
Her conquest now their fondest dream,
Not reciprocity!

Forbid ye this! loved shades of those,
Her patriots of the past,
Who fought to save her from such woes,
For this, who breathed their last.
Few we to face their foe to-day,
With arts our arms to bless,
Out-numbered when far less than they,
As history can confess.
When now the iron horse's speed,
And lightning's ready tongue,
Are our's in the hour of need,
Our safety to become.

That horse whose course so swiftly won,
It like the bird's becomes,
We flash the magic whisper, come,
And lo! that horse, he comes
With guns, munitions, horses, men,
Whose swiftest shames the swallow,
Wherever most required then,
While these as swiftly follow,
Thro' day and night, who wings his course
O'er village, town and vale,
Like that her fabled flying horse
In Araby's old tale.

Thus when the order flashed of one,
Obeyed of the other,
Our numbers multiplied become,
This land and hether cover.
Well guard ye then their mutual track
So vital to this land.
From raid or sudden war's attack,
Or any treacherous hand.

Fear we to face their foes to-day
With these our arms to bless,
This weaker land's now hopeful stay,
In war her wrongs redress;
When girdled by the lightnings tongue,
To far Britannia's shore,
Our whispers too and fro can come
The wide Atlantic o'er.
With this its so fast flashing speed
Whenever danger lowers,
To cheer us in our hour of need,
At once and answer ours;
To bid us firm to duty stand,
And tell us that her men,
Are sailing from old England,
To meet war's crisis then.

Most wond'rous tongue, how great thy boon!
Whose universal voice,
Is now Britannia's any noon,
Our noon's ear to rejoice.
How different was it in the day
Of this land's "Auld lang syne,"
When ships oft weather-beaten lay
In many her anxious time,
And no immediate voice could reach,
Her ear then o'er the ocean,
When these, their only voices speech,
Oft calmed or slow of motion.
E're yet the iron horse's strength
Had triumphed o'er earth's waters,
And won his water course at length,
From all old Neptune's daughters.

When forced this land's the fight maintain,
How noble then devotion!
Perchance while slumbering on the main,
Their rescue without motion.

Brave hearts of oak! a moment then
To fear who never knew;
Though far the foe out-numbered them,
Whose hearts their steel as true.
May all who here adopt a home,
As worthy prove this land,
As ye loved homes who left to roam,
For love of fatherland.
Shall we forget ye, true and brave.
Your memories fail to honor,
Who fought and died, your land to save
From slavery's dishonor,
Of life nor thought when liberty,
Was trembling in the scale,
Who scorned life defeat to see,
And gave theirs to prevail.
Long may your memories handed down,
Our sires to each son—
The glory of this land's become—
To do as ye have done.
Shall we forget ye, Britain's who,
While memory ours—ever;
No, never while to honor true,
Shall we forget ye—never.

Then as her sons of liberty,
In Switzer's-land have done,
Where all are bound so happily,

Good marksmen to become—
Where this to fail is a disgrace,
And oft the sire and son,
In loving rivalry will place,
The best which shall become,
Like her's, a land of riflemen,
May this in time become,
To emulate with Switzers, then,
This art, their rights which won.
Who, in all times, whate'er their arms,
Have fought and well preserved,
With bow or rifle, in alarms,
The freedom all deserved;
These worthy sons, of patriots bold,
Whose shafts of old they drew,
As true in freedom's cause of old,
As their son's rifles do;
Altho' of Hoffer and of Tell,
Still these, the worthy sons,
Whose love of freedom, 's theirs as well,
From such ancestors comes;
Is not this land's loved liberty,
As dear to him who comes;
Are such less worthy her's to be,
Than of theirs—Switzer's sons?
If dauntless as these, for their right,
Fear not the issue then,
If well ye trust in Him Whose might
Saved Daniel in the den,
Then as the stripling David slew
Goliath in the fight,
The Lord of hosts will be with you,
Your love and well requite.]

God save the Queen, her lands to rule,
Him may her's ne'er give cause
Her right in war to over-rule,
Her people's sins because
God save this land, our homes and laws,
As did he in the past,
And may we never give Him cause,
For anger to our last.
And thou, loved Queen, thy empire's pride
May thou and thine e'er cherish,
These scattered far o'er every tide
Nor thine or their love perish;
That these, Britannia's tower of strength,
Should fortune on hers lower,
May prove in all times future length,
Of love how great the power;
Then shall her lands, all waters o'er,
Pour forth their sons of toil,
To swell her rampant lion's roar,
And guard her empire's soil,

PARTING ADDRESS.
— —

And now, to all who've read me through,
E're parting, I would say,
My moral's point I here pursue,
My purpose to betray.
If but one spark of patriot fire
This strikes where chill the heart,
'Twill well fulfil my heart's desire—
Well play its modest part.
The love of home to raise in land,
And love of land inspire—
For this my little work I planned,
May this the land's-all fire.
Hence, only in satiric song,
Strayed I on other wing,
Some boastful notes to swell as strong
As those, our neighbors sing—
Where, with a rhymers's license used,
Their land's exaggeration,
With which the truth, so oft abused,
By that bombastic nation.

ERRATA.

- Page 10, line 25, instead of must, read—most.
“ 16, “ 7, instead of or, read—o’er.
“ 16, “ 30, instead of those, read—these.
“ 18, “ 3, instead of on, read—o’er.
“ 19, “ 7, instead of sleeps, read—sleep.
“ 21, “ 7, instead of plan, read—please.
“ 26, “ 5, instead of Few, read—Fear.
“ 26, “ 28, instead of heather, read—better.
Page 21, line 20, “ May long avert war’s danger,” read—
“ May daunt the ruthless stranger.”